



Hawaiʻi Volcanoes National Park encompasses 323,431 acres (130,888 hectares) of dynamic, ever-changing environments including alpine, rain forest, rugged coastline, desert, and active volcanism. Explore the harsh, hot, and windy environment of the coast or experience Mauna Loa, where plants and animals struggle to survive in temperatures as low as 10° F (-12° C).

The park offers over 150 miles (241 km) of trails ranging in elevation from sea level to 13,667 feet (4,169 m). With over half of the park designated as wilderness, there are numerous opportunities for solitude and to experience life on active volcanoes.

Things to Know Before You Go

All Overnight Backcountry Hikers Must Register

Obtain a free permit at the Kīlauea Visitor Center (visit www.nps.gov/havo for current hours of operation). Permits are issued on a first-come basis, no earlier than the day before your hike. When you return from your trip, stop at the Kīlauea Visitor Center or call 808-985-6017 to check out. Failure to check out will not automatically trigger a search by park rangers.

Services are Limited at Trailheads

There is no water at trailheads and public transportation is unavailable. There are 911 phones (for emergency use only) located at Hilina Pali Overlook and Puʻu Loa and Kaʻū Desert Trailheads.

Leave No Trace and Safety

Leave No Trace

- ✔ Plan Ahead and Prepare
- ✔ Follow Marked Trails
- ✔ Camp at Designated Sites
- ✔ Pack It In, Pack It Out
- ✔ Leave What You Find
- ✔ No Campfires
- ✔ Do Not Feed or Harm Wildlife
- ✔ Be Considerate of Other Visitors



Pack the Essentials for a Safe and Comfortable Trip

- ✔ Water—minimum 3 quarts / liters of water per person per day
- ✔ First aid kit
- ✔ Cook stove, fuel, utensils
- ✔ Sunglasses, sunscreen, hat, rain gear
- ✔ Trail map
- ✔ Toilet paper and bag to pack it out
- ✔ Broken-in sturdy boots, moleskin
- ✔ Emergency food supplies
- ✔ Whistle
- ✔ Signaling device (mirror, etc.)
- ✔ Flashlight and extra batteries



In Case of Emergency

Before you go, leave a trip plan with another person. If lost, stay where you are. Use bright colors and reflective materials to attract attention. Park rangers will not start a backcountry search until 24-hours after they are notified that a hiker is missing. To report a lost or overdue hiker, call 808-985-6001.

Explore Kīlauea’s East Rift and Coastal Areas

Camping Limits

Campers can stay a maximum of three (3) nights per site. Groups are limited to 12 people. A total of 16 people per night is allowed at each site. When you return, check out at the Kīlauea Visitor Center or call 808-985-6017.

Backcountry Facilities

- **Kaʻaha, Halapē, and Keauhou** have three-walled shelters (not for camping). Due to centipedes and ants, tents are advised.
- **Pepeiao** has a cabin with three beds, but campers also may use tents.
- **ʻĀpua Point and Nāpau Crater** campsites don’t have water or shelter.
- **Water:** Kaʻaha, Halapē, Keauhou, and Pepeiao have catchment rainwater tanks. You must treat the water before drinking. When registering at the Kīlauea Visitor Center, check for the current water levels.
- **Toilets:** All campsites have pit toilets. Please use them. Do not put trash in the toilets—pack it out.

Nāpau Crater Area

Anyone who plans to hike past Puʻu Huluhulu or up the Nāulu Trail from Kealakomo must obtain a free permit at the Kīlauea Visitor Center. Trails are marked with ahu (stacked rocks). Stay alert and hike during daylight hours. Trails over lava flows are almost impossible to follow at night.



Puʻu ʻŌʻō (the active vent) and its adjacent lava flows are **closed** to hikers by the park superintendent. Catastrophic collapses have weakened Puʻu ʻŌʻō. The entire area is unstable, riddled with deep cracks, and extremely dangerous.

Extreme Weather

Intense sunlight, wind, and high temperatures can lead to dehydration, heat exhaustion, or sunstroke. Cold wind and driving rain are possible any time of the year and may cause low body temperature (hypothermia). Pace yourself, drink fluids, eat snacks, and avoid hiking at mid-day. Wear sunglasses, sunscreen, and a hat. Take layers of clothing to regulate body temperature.

Steep and Rocky Terrain

Watch your footing along the hot and windy trail. Steep cliffs (pali) mark the flank of Kīlauea. Maximum elevation change between trail and campsite is 3,000 feet (1,000 m). Stay on trails. Do not cut across switchbacks as this accelerates erosion. Trails are marked by ahu (stacked rocks) that may be difficult to see in the rain and mist, and impossible to find in the dark. Trails are rocky and uneven, and may be overgrown with thick vegetation. Follow the ahu through these areas.

Pesky and Dangerous Animals

Centipedes, scorpions, and black widow spiders are common in stone walls and rocky areas. Sharks are sometimes seen in coastal waters. Beware of sea urchins (wana), tubeworm casts, and sharp rocks when wading or swimming. Harmful mongooses, mice, and feral cats scavenge on unattended food supplies. Store food securely and keep a clean camp.



Unexploded Ammunition

In the Kaʻū Desert and coastal areas of west Kaʻaha, there may be unexploded World War II ammunition on the ground. If you see any, do not touch it. Report the location to a park ranger.

Seismic and Volcanic Hazards

An earthquake can cause a locally-generated tsunami at the coast. If you feel a strong earthquake, move to high ground immediately. On the rift zones, volcanic eruptions are possible at any time. Stay upslope and upwind from active lava flows and their gases. Volcanic gas can present problems miles downwind from its source and cause breathing problems. Stay on trails — earth cracks and lava tubes are numerous and often hidden beneath a thin crust.

Fire Hazards

Thick grass and brush create a fire hazard in the coastal area. Do not smoke while hiking. Campfires, firearms, and fireworks are prohibited.

Protect Precious Plants, Animals, and Archeological Sites

Turtles

Endangered Hawksbill sea turtles nest and threatened green sea turtles rest on park beaches. Do not camp in areas posted as turtle nesting habitat at ʻĀpua, Halapē, and other beaches. Federal and state laws protect all sea turtles from harm.



Archeology

Respect and help protect Hawaiian archeological sites. Do not climb on or alter any rock structures, such as walls, house platforms, pits, or mounds. Do not walk on or make rubbings of petroglyphs.

Fishing

Fishing along the coastline from the park’s eastern boundary to the cliff midway between Keauhou and Halapē is restricted to

native Hawaiian residents of Kalapana. It is your responsibility to understand and obey all fishing regulations.

Swimming

There are very few sheltered swimming sites along the coast. Rough seas, high surf, and strong, unpredictable currents are typical of the park’s coastline. Avoid entering the open ocean. Help protect the rare plants and animals that live in tide pools and brackish ponds. Rinse off all soap and sunscreen before entering them.

Pets and Stock Use

Dogs and other pets are not allowed on park trails or in wilderness areas. Horses, donkeys, and mules are allowed in the backcountry with a valid backcountry permit (limit of 6 animals per site). Tether livestock at least 100 feet (30 m) from campsites in an area that presents no hazard or sanitation problems to other campers. Hikers encountering horse parties should quietly step off the trail and allow the animals to pass.

Hike Mauna Loa

Camping Limits

Campers can stay a maximum of three (3) consecutive nights per site. A total of eight (8) people are allowed per night at Puʻuʻulaʻula (Red Hill) Cabin, and 12 people at the Mauna Loa Cabin. When you return, check out at the Kīlauea Visitor Center or call 808-985-6017.

Backcountry Facilities

- **Puʻuʻulaʻula (Red Hill) Cabin** at 10,035 feet (3,059 m) has eight (8) bunks with mattresses. Available on a first-come basis.
- **Mauna Loa Cabin** on the rim of Mokuʻāweoweo at 13, 250 feet (4,039 m) has 12 bunks with mattresses. Available on a first-come basis.
- **Water:** Cabins have attached water catchments tanks. Check on current water levels when registering. Treat all water before drinking.
- **Toilets:** Pit toilets are provided. Please use them. Do not put trash in the pit toilets—pack it out.

Extreme Weather

Be prepared for severe winter conditions any time of the year, including blizzards, whiteouts, snow, and heavy rain. Temperatures drop below freezing at night. The ahu (stacked rocks) trail markers can be obscured by fog. Do not lose sight of the ahu behind you as you look for the ahu ahead. It is easy to become disoriented. If you can’t find your way, stop and wait for the weather to improve. Ultra-violet sunlight is intense, especially with snow cover. Sunglasses and sunscreen are preventative measures against snow blindness and sunburn.



Health Hazards


You will be hiking at high altitudes under rigorous conditions—altitude sickness is common. The only cure is to descend to lower elevations. Pace yourself and drink plenty of water. Pack your extra clothing and sleeping bag in plastic bags for waterproofness. Stay warm and dry—hypothermia (low body temperature) is a killer.

Volcanic Hazards

Eruptions are possible at any time. Stay upslope from active lava flows and remain on high ground. Stay upwind of volcanic gasses. Stay on trails—earth cracks and lava tubes are numerous and often hidden beneath a thin crust.

Fire Hazards

The Mauna Loa Road traverses areas which contain very flammable grasses and brush. Do not smoke while hiking. Campfires, firearms, and fireworks are prohibited.



For more information:

www.nps.gov/havo

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Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park
Backcountry Map

